DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 084 222 SP 006 966

AUTHOR	Maheu, Rene
TITLE	[Relations Between Sport and Education.]
INSTITUTION	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, Paris (France).
PUB DATE	24 Aug 72
NOTE	11p.; Speech given before the Scientific Congress convened by the Organizing Committee for the Games of the 20th Olympiad, Munich (Germany) August 24, 1972
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS	Athletic Programs; *Athletics; Educational Change; Educational Innovation; *Physical Education; *Self Control; *Sportsmanship; *Teamwork

ABSTRACT

This paper deals with the role of sports in the educational process. The following points are discussed: a) sport as relaxation, b) sport as an exercise in self-control, and c) sport as a builder of character. Based on these points, the concept of automatic incorporation of physical education in the classroom is presented, with emphasis on the reform in the field of education which would encompass "lifelong education." The summation of the paper stresses a) the educational potential of sport, b) the involvement of both individual freedom and communion with man in the field of sport, c) the promotion of health and happiness, and d) the combination of education and sport in a changing society. (BRB)

ED 084222

DG/72/15

I° SP

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL,
SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

Address by
Mr. René Maheu

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

Director-General
of the United Nations Educational,
Scientific and Cultural Organization
(Unesco)

at the Scientific Congress on
"Sport in the Modern World - Chances and Problems"
convened by the Organizing Committee for the Games
of the XXth Olympiad

Munich, 24 August 1972

SP 006 966

FILMED FROM BEST AVAILABLE COPY

DG/72/15

Mr. Minister,
Mr. President,
Your Eminence,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

With only two days to go to the opening of the XXth Olympic Games, as the world prepares to attune its life for the next two weeks to the peaceful contests for which Munich is providing such a wonderful setting, I am deeply conscious of the honour falling to me in this opportunity of speaking in the illustrious halls of the Bavarian Academy of Science, during the Scientific Congress on the chances and problems of sport in the modern world, which the Organizing Committee for the Games has had the excellent idea of convening and for which it has prepared so well.

This honour is, I feel, first and foremost a tribute to Unesco, the Organization I serve, which has always been aware of the human value of sport. The generous words we have just heard from our distinguished German hosts confirm me in this feeling. I assure you most gratefully, Mr. Minister and Mr. President, that they have furnished invaluable encouragement for the pursuit of our efforts to give sport a greater place in education and in the culture of modern man as a means of ensuring the harmonious development of the individual and mutual understanding among the peoples.

In this great task, it is particularly appropriate, I think, that there should be co-operation between an intergovernmental organization such as Unesco and non-governmental international sports organizations such as the International Olympic Committee - whose new Vice-President I have pleasure in congratulating - and the International Council of Sport and Physical Education - to whose distinguished President, the Right Honourable Philip Noel-Baker, Olympic silver medallist, senior international official of the League of Nations, statesman and winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, I would convey my respectful greetings.

It is with this sort of co-operation in mind that I should like to speak to you this evening about the relations between sport and education.

The educational virtues of sport no longer need to be proved and I have no intention of arguing in their favour before such a knowledgeable audience as this. I mean, rather, after briefly stating what they are, to consider why they are not made use of as systematically and as fully as could and should be the case, and to see what are the main changes which need to be made, as regards both education and sport, in our present-day ideas and practices, so that sport may be given its due place in the all-round education of man.

Sport is first and foremost a factor making for equilibrium in the general development of the personality - equilibrium between mind and body, between affectivity and energy, and between the individual and the group. In a civilization which places its essential emphasis on the intellectual and the technological

and concentrates excellence in the brain, relying on machines for power, and at a time when the sense of proportion has been largely lost and when distortions of all kinds are rife, this factor making for balance, fullness and harmony is particularly beneficient.

Moreover, sport is play or, in other words, a non-utilitarian activity, pursued for its own sake and being its own reward, subject to no rules other than those it freely sets for itself. In this respect, too, it is an invaluable corrective to the desiccating utilitarianism of our age, for, over and above the discoveries and satisfactions derived from sport itself, it recalls that need and capacity for self-expression without practical purpose, which is as it were an instinctive craving for generosity and beauty in man, first satisfied in play. Sport in this is akin to art. Like art, it conjures out of the grey monotony of ordinary time and space moments of perfection and motions in the absolute which serve no purpose save to bring home to us the grace of the fact of existence. Like art, it is a catharsis, a purification of the emotions by diversion or sublimation from action to symbol.

At the same time, however, paradoxically but significantly, this form of play is an exacting exercise in self-knowledge and self-control. Consciously accepting the crude basic datum - namely the body - sport sets out, by precise and rigorous ascesis, to discover its motive springs - its weaknesses as well as its resources - so as to use them systematically, and after careful consideration, to the best possible effect. No effort to explore the actuality and potentialities of the self is as exacting in the pursuit of truth as that involved in training for sport; and in no other sphere does the individual facing a test, alone or as a member of a team, find a truer measure of his physical and moral stature than on the sports field.

Last and above all, sport is a striving to surpass oneself and as such it is essentially a moral experience. In training or in competition, sport consists in pushing back one's limitations either by mastering or by exalting one's own nature. It is thus a wonderful discipline for energy, in which a man prepares himself for high endeavours of any kind, in deepest obscurity or in the fullest glare of day, those of the soul as well as those of the body.

Among the efforts constantly necessitated by sport, there is none more important for the training of the character than acceptance and observance of the rules, in an almost religious sense: those rules which are all the more essential to the game because they are the very expression and guarantee of its specific freedom. In this respect, sport is a means of learning the spirit of justice. It is, in my opinion, quite pointless to try to define status in sport by social and economic criteria, such as absence of financial remuneration, for such criteria vary from one society to another: what means something in one place, means nothing, or is quite impossible, somewhere else. The essence of sport is in fact an attitude of mind, a practical moral approach to life, and this attitude of mind, which may be found alike among professionals and among amateurs, is the sense of justice, so deeply anchored and so overriding that, when competition is most intense, the athlete will place it above even his own victory. This is expressed in that fine

term fair play, and the fact that it is used in all circumstances, in everyday life as well as on the playing field, to describe the purest and most chivalrous integrity is a tribute to the moral value of sport and the nobility of those who practise it.

All this, which I apologise for having spoken of so summarily, is now universally recognized. The matter is settled so far as ideas are concerned. But it does not follow that the game is won as regards institutions and habits - as regards making sport an integral factor in education, strongly rooted, influential and effective. Far from it, indeed.

If we except the English-speaking countries - and they are, indeed, a very remarkable exception - it is quite clear that, in the world as a whole and considering all branches together, sport has developed primarily outside the school and the university. It has, in any case, been organized, in the form of clubs, federations, and governmental or semi-official services, outside the educational system. It is another system, and the schoolchild or the student who goes to a club to practise this or that favourite sport definitely feels that the sociological and psychological environment he finds there is profoundly different from that in which his studies are conducted. For the same reasons, the university clubs - except, I say again, in Great Britain, the United States and the countries following the British tradition - are a species apart.

The reason for this is that the development of sport - and this is the nub of the matter - is based on ideas, and represents an aspect of social life, which belong to a scheme of things distinct from education, having no direct, or at least no organized, connexion with it. I have in mind the use of leisure. Let it be said that sport as a social phenomenon is one of the by-products of the increase in leisure which mechanization has brought about; and its stupendous expansion owes more to that kind of abhorrence of a vacuum which has caused it to provide occupation for the increasing amount of free time made available by modern life than to the ideal of virtue preached by its apostles at the beginning of the century. We accordingly find sport tending far more towards that relatively negative end than towards playing a part in training or preparation for life or - as is even more uncommon - in education in the broader sense or in the full development of the personality, as recommended by such men as Pierre de Coubertin.

This is particularly true in the case of spectator sports. Admittedly sport, in its competitive aspect - which is eminently appropriate to its essential character as a test, a measure of strength and a striving to excel - provides admirable material for beautiful and stirring performances. And this, quite rightly, forms part of the dramatic culture of the modern world. But it cannot be denied, on the other hand, that the development of spectator sports has diverted attention from the intrinsic moral reality of sport, concentrating instead on its entertainment value. Entertainment is indeed what sport has become for masses of people, who are reduced to the rôle of mere spectators, no longer required even to make their way to the stadium since radio and television bring sport into the

home. But entertainment is what is most remote from real life. We thus find one section of young people denouncing sport as an alienating factor: this is a warning that deserves heed.

These are the main features of its very success that are diverting sport from its educational mission. It must also be recognized, however, in all fairness, that the educational systems, for their part, are not showing any eagerness to fit sport into their structures and activities.

First of all - as in Coubertin's time - sport continues to clash with the intellectualism and utilitarianism that, more than ever before, dominate established education throughout the world. I say more than ever before, because this is the consequence of the growing importance assumed by science and technology in our civilization. And I say throughout the world, because the pursuit of development, which has become a question of life or death for all the nations, tends towards the universal installation of this scientific and technological civilization.

The young are stifled by the ascendancy of a far too narrow form of education, in which the priority that is systematically accorded to the exercise of the intellect - and to its most utilitarian capacities and applications - leaves undeveloped those potentialities in physical sensitivity, emotional intuition, aesthetic appreciation, self-expression through play or artistic creation, possessed in some degree by every individual, which alone make it possible to enjoy what life offers. In the curricula and time-tables of most educational systems, physical education and sport are still sacrificed to the intellectual disciplines, like so many other essential educational activities, such as the development of aesthetic appreciation, sex education, training in citizenship and preparation for life in society. From his school days on, therefore, man is moulded as a one-dimensional being, and the society that he builds in his own image only serves to magnify and institutionalize this cruel, unhappy inhumanity.

Turning now to the teachers, the ideal arrangement would be, as in certain English grammar schools, for some master teaching academic subjects to take games as well, acting as instructor for certain sports included in the curriculum for their contribution to all-round education. But, instead, we find teachers of physical education treated as a separate category in the profession, with limited qualifications and a lower grading, playing only a marginal part in the general education of most young people, as in the life of the school.

It is true that certain universities specialize in achieving excellence in sport and set out, by the granting of special advantages, to secure the help of the best trainers and the enrolment among their students of the most gifted athletes. But this reversal of the order of values and disciplines, which makes these universities training grounds for professional players and athletes rather than centres of learning, does not affect the fundamental segregation of the intellectual from the physical, which is the real evil to be remedied.

The same remarks might be made in respect of the sports facilities available in schools and universities. Although considerable progress has been made in all

countries - at the cost, it must be said, of great sacrifices by the State or private organizations - with regard to the financial resources allocated for such facilities, they are still too seldom an integral part of the structure and the whole life of the academic community, as they are in such outstanding cases as Eton and Rugby, Oxford and Cambridge. The playing field, the gymnasium, basket ball court or fencing school, the swimming pool and track must be interdependent with the classroom, the study, the laboratory and library, as with the assembly hall and the hobbies-room, catering conveniently for the different worlds, the various facets of the self which, together, make up the human individual. And let us end, once for all, the hypocrisy of making shift with the school playground, that cloister from which no prayers arise, that prison of innocence, where so much vital energy is crippled or runs to waste.

In the face of this situation, which I have, of course, by simplification, somewhat overdrawn, the reaction must be to open up the educational and sports systems, on both sides, so that there may be interpenetration between them. I believe that, on the education side, the circumstances are propitious for such action. I am less sure that the same applies in regard to sport. But, in any case, it is certain that nothing will be done unless those in positions of responsibility, who must also be men of vision capable of capturing the imagination and winning the sympathy of the general public - particularly the younger generation - initiate determined innovations on both sides. This is something for which I earnestly hope and I, for my part, am ready to employ all the energy and authority at my command for this purpose. It is with this possibility in mind that I should like to put before you certain observations and reflections that I personally think very important.

I have said that, so far as education is concerned, the time is propitious. The prime reason is that, in almost all countries, there is a prevailing feeling - among the general public and politicians as well as among technicians and specialists, not to mention pupils and students - that far-reaching reforms and shifts of emphasis are called for in the present educational systems. I share this feeling, and references to the "crisis in education", even if made rather at random, do not frighten me. I think that a new pattern of man is being produced and I believe that this is indeed a necessary mutation, if humanity is to be able to find acceptable solutions, at least for some time to come, to the daunting problems set by the imbalances and injustices marking its own runaway progress. This will assuredly require much time and effort, since the problems are now planet-wide and, because of the new interdependence in which the world's various centres of civilization are united, call for solutions both manifold and co-ordinated. It will no doubt take several generations of effort to accomplish the transition, just as it did when, in the West, the classical model gave way to the Christian, or again when Mediaeval man evolved into post-Renaissance man. But it seems to me that we are already engaged in this process and, while we ourselves are not destined to see its end, we can at least do much to ease the way to a solution for our successors.

Here a certain target and a certain approach are coming into clearer focus. The target is the full development of man as a multi-dimensional being; the approach is life-long education. This is not the place to dwell at length on these ideas, of which I shall merely say that they now underlie the whole of Unesco's activities in education. I would simply draw attention to the new possibilities they offer for integrating sport with education.

The effort to develop a multi-dimensional educational model - not to be confused either with a multiplicity, simultaneous or successive, of mutually exclusive selective streams, or with an accumulation of many different subjects, leading eventually to overstrain - marks the resumption, in the modern age, of the humanist movement which led education to its greatest success: those which gave man the means to self-mastery and harmonious self-fulfilment. From this point of view, education consists less in acquiring knowledge and skills for the sake of their particular intellectual or physical efficacy than in developing attitudes and capabilities which can be applied to many ends so as to enable the individual genuinely to realize his potentialities. It means, essentially, "learning to be", to use the striking phrase chosen for the title of its Report by Unesco's International Commission on the Development of Education, presided over by Mr. Edgar Faure.

Such a conception of education can obviously not be reconciled with the emphasis on the narrowly intellectual and utilitarian which is still characteristic of most educational systems and which, as I have said, constitutes one of the major obstacles to the introduction of sport into education. It must sooner or later revolutionize the way school curricula are organized and the arrangements for the progressive guidance of pupils and students. It calls also for a new kind of relationship, in the educational process, between teacher and taught; despite the difference in their rôles, both must be thought of as involved in the same effort to explore the self and the other for their mutual enrichment. It therefore calls for a new kind of teacher, a guide, philosopher and friend rather than a preceptor.

It is inconceivable that, in this root-and-branch reshaping of education, physical education and sport should not find their rightful place. They are too important as factors in producing a balanced and complete personality, and afford the new style of education too many opportunities for active inspiration, to be neglected yet again this time. Even so, it is true that those responsible for this new education must still become aware of the regenerative trend in education which is spreading throughout the world, and must rise to the occasion. The time has come for them to show that they, too, are masters in the true sense of the term, that is to say bearing messages and setting examples that can shape the course of life.

I have spoken of life-long education. Indeed, this multi-dimensional education, devoted to learning to be, has no meaning and cannot even take shape save in a context of effort coextensive with the whole of the community and with the duration of the individual's life. This view is becoming more and more widely accepted, as could clearly be seen, lately, at Unesco's Third International Conference on Adult Education, held in Tokyo.

We are probably still far from having appreciated all its implications, and further still from having achieved the necessary conditions for its effective application. Even now, however, we can see that radical changes will have to be made in the organization of the educational system, with particular reference to the priorities on which the planning of efforts and the allocation of resources are based, to governmental and administrative structures, and finally, to the educational facilities provided themselves.

Concerning the allocation of resources, I think that we are moving in the direction of an increase in the percentage allocated for adult education as compared with education for young people, which up till now has had the lion's share of attention. This is also the moment to recall that nothing is more false than to believe, as people are too often led to do by the prestige attaching to top-level competition, in certain branches particularly, that sport is the preserve of those in the flower of youth. Jean Borotra, whom I am happy to see among us this evening, is a remarkable case in point. Where governmental and administrative structures are concerned, it is vital that the departments responsible for young people and sport should cease to form, as they do in many countries, a closed system, often highly subject to political pressures, and should become an integral part either of what I shall call the "established" educational nexus, meaning the school and university system, or of the cultural and communication nexus, it being understood that both these, although at the moment distinct, are parts of one and the same entity whose fundamental unity will one day have to be realized.

As regards educational facilities, the chief problem is that of the function and organization of universities and schools. On this subject, I would say that I in no way support those who say that these institutions, which are a precious inheritance, the first from the Mediterranean and religious spirit of the Muslim and Christian Middle Ages, the second from the Western democratic and secular spirit of the industrial era, have had their day and must be discarded. I believe most strongly that they must be kept, but it is clear that they need to be profoundly recast so as to attune them to all the varied aspects and manifold needs and aspirations of modern society and to integrate them in an all-embracing and flexible system of education viewed as a totality, continuing throughout life. The first necessity is that these establishments should cease to be closed worlds on the edge of real life - ghettoes, as some would say, though this is certainly an exaggeration. This is what is happening with universities and it must happen with schools as well, both primary and secondary.

Here, too, there is no doubt that this transformation, which will make school and university establishments into centres of community life for young people and adults, where study, life and play are blended together in mutually advantageous endeavour and achievement, will open up new possibilities for sport in the very heart of the educational process. An end will thus be put at last to the absurd duality of systems which too often proceed in mutual ignorance of each other: physical education and school and university sport, on the one side, and just plain sport and open-air activities, on the other. It will be possible to save all the money spent on sports facilities which are open only to some people for

some of the time, like those sports grounds and swimming baths which are closed during the summer on the grounds that it is holiday time, or those huge stadiums which open only for a weekend event. We shall have done with those clubs where young people come in contact with trainers concerned with performance but who are rarely educators concerned first and foremost with the man. Above all, we shall have done with the fragmentation of society and the person, and the frustrations and ill-balance which inevitably result from a sense of unfulfilment.

Will sport be able to take advantage of the opportunities thus offered to it by the fundamental reform of education now beginning, and at last play its full part in the individual and social education of man? I am not so sure of this as I should like to be. For, if this is to be possible, sport, too, will have to undergo a no less fundamental reform, through a dual process of return to the fountain-head and continual discovery.

May I be allowed to mention some directions in which I think this reform should first be initiated?

To start with, those in charge of sport, whether they are responsible for governmental or non-governmental bodies, must, in their present thinking and future plans, at national and international level, give more consideration to all I said at the beginning about the educational potential of sport - by which it alone acquires human significance - and less to its spectacular side, though here too the aim should be to convey a moral meaning, as the founder of the modern Olympic Games wished.

The success of spectator sports and the importance they have assumed in people's lives are unfortunately too often exploited for ends alien or even opposed to sport, which are so many corrupting and distorting factors - commercialism, chauvinism and politics. The time has come to react and to react strongly if we wish to save the soul of sport. The time has come to choose between the Roman circus and the Greek palaestra. The time has come to choose between the glorification of national pride and the glorification of the brotherhood of man, to choose between what sets men against each other and what unites them.

Sport must also return to nature. The excessive seeking after great exploits, which call for the fulfilment of more and more exceptional conditions, combined with the emphasis on precision characteristic of top-level competition, especially in international events and tournaments, have progressively led sport to form its own physical universe, sealed off from the chance happenings of true nature, and thus abnormal in its very striving to realize an abstract norm. This also is a serious distortion, because the principle of sport and the source of its purest joys is to restore to the body its instinctive freedom and hence to make possible the communion of man with that immense nature of which he forms a part.

This return to truth and physical well-being is more than ever necessary today to offset the growing disequilibrium which mechanization and the artificial living conditions prevailing in large urban centres have brought to our way of life. Sport was originally and primarily the city-dwellers' escape to the open air, the prophetic significance of which was to warn mankind of the dangers of industrial civilization. This basic function of sport in promoting health and happiness is something we cannot forget when we see this civilization increasingly destroying and polluting the natural environment of man. But we must also make sure that sport does not itself participate in the dehumanizing process which threatens us.

And now a final remark. Sport, which has become a universal phenomenon, served by a distinguished world-wide organization like the Olympic body, is in duty bound to accept the implications of this universality. By this, I mean that it must recognize and reflect in its structure, and maintain and indeed develop in its action, the manifold variety of cultures which constitutes the richness of mankind's spiritual heritage and in which man's inexhaustible creative freedom finds expression. If universality is to be achieved, any form of cultural ethnocentrism must be resolutely repudiated - this is, for Unesco, a fundamental principle.

There is thus no question of challenging the enduring value of sport as derived from the Hellenic tradition and that of the English-speaking countries, when it is pointed out that these are not the only examples in the world whose physical and moral virtues deserve to be highlighted for educational and aesthetic purposes. Here again we must avoid restriction by any rigid tradition and must be resolutely receptive to the great variety of human possibilities.

It is paradoxical that peoples with an innate gift for dancing, intensely alive to the cathartic and educational virtues of games, and among whom physical culture is intimately associated with the life of the community, should confine themselves to imitating the sports of other nations - and this at a time when a movement conducive to liberation of the forms and rhythms of physical expression is to be seen taking shape in those same nations. It would be regrettable if the introduction among these peoples of strictly regulated practices in sport were to prove prejudicial to their own values in respect of play. Nor should a desire for international prestige prompt them to excessive efforts to produce small élites of championship standard, to the detriment of the general advance of the people at large. It is perhaps not unduly fanciful, therefore, to hope that one day, within the context of world events such as the Olympic Games, or side by side with them, contests may be organized that will be less strictly regulated than those with which we are familiar, in which physical exercises and games owing their existence to the genius of widely varying societies would be represented. The world sings with many voices. The universal festival of youth of which Pierre de Coubertin dreamed should be in its image.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Mankind is passing through a period of rapid and far-reaching mutation - as we all feel. It is groping for its way among a confusion of paths leading to

futures both splendid and terrifying. Education and sport cannot stand aside from this general need for change. Far from trying to escape it, they are, on the contrary, in duty bound to contribute to the general movement of change with all the clarity and generosity of mind going with the mission they have to fulfil, and they must begin by carrying out the necessary reforms in their own fields.

I am one of those who think that education and sport will be able to discharge this vital task of reforming systems - and society itself throughout its fabric - all the more effectively if they combine their efforts, enriching and strengthening one another by the experience and resources of both. This, at least, is the spirit in which Unesco views these problems and calls for the collaboration of all organizations and all men of goodwill who share its faith in man and who, like it, devote themselves to man's service.